

Keynote Address - November 30
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EPA and OSHA have common problems.

In one sense, EPA's customers are everyone who drinks water or breathes the air. In that same sense, OSHA's customers are half of all Americans—everyone who's working. For all practical purposes, every man, woman and child in the U.S. has a stake in clear water, clean air and safety in the workplace.

- Department store owner John Wanamaker reportedly said, "The customer is always right." That approach makes sense for a business. A company that wants to build an unparalleled reputation for service may be willing to stand the loss when a customer really isn't right. But it won't work for a regulatory agency.
- Because fully pleasing one customer inevitably leads to displeasing another. And when our goal is simply pleasing the customer standing in front of us, we have failed to serve our true customer—the American public.
- However, even if we can't please every one of our customers, we need to provide good service. We need to be fair and impartial, and we need to be prompt in responding to customer requests, concerns and complaints. Complaints is one area that OSHA needs to focus on according to NPR's recently released report.
- Of course, sometimes it seems as if we can't please anyone. EPA and OSHA are the regulators everyone loves to hate. We're reviled and ridiculed at the same time. Just whispering our name brings money into the coffers of half the trade associations in Washington. And we're still trying to dispel the rumor that OSHA killed the tooth fairy by prohibiting dentists from returning extracted teeth to children.
- Yet others, including Ralph Nader, take us to task for not conducting more inspections, issuing more citations, proposing more penalties. They suggest that we are toothless tigers, no longer up to the task of enforcing the law. Too strong or too weak? Too timid or too aggressive? Or both at the same time!
- No one loves a regulator! Father spent 40 years in private industry as an engineer. Once I got this job, I shared with him my observation that the OSHA staff are hard working and work a lot. He responded that that is what is wrong with the country, the regulators are working 12 hours a day.
- Part of the problem is that costs and benefits appear to accrue to different groups. When it comes to occupational safety and health, most people think the benefits accrue to workers and their families while the costs are borne by employers. That's only partly true. The reality is that a safe

getting recycling incorporated into the education of our children.

- Yet, we often find, while our outreach efforts are welcomed, our regulatory actions are not universally admired. In part, that's because some people feel left out of the regulatory process. That's what we learned through our Customer Satisfaction survey.
- We in OSHA have prided ourselves on our efforts to involve our stakeholders in developing regulations. Yet we learned from the customers surveyed on our behalf--safety and health professionals--that many of them felt left out of the process. That doesn't make sense to us. We know we keep them informed. We know we encourage their participation. And their professional organizations have shared comments with us in virtually every OSHA rulemaking. But the perception among the individuals we surveyed is that they would welcome more direct involvement with OSHA in its rulemaking.
- So we need to address that perception. Next week our senior managers will be gathering for a special retreat. And one of the most important topics will be our communications strategy--our outreach to safety and health professionals and others throughout the U.S. Involving professional, trade and union groups is not enough. We need to reach individuals directly. We have got to go beyond communicating with organizations, but focus on the individuals as well.
- The survey reminds us that communication with our customers must be a two-way street. One source of feedback we've found helpful is our advisory committees. We have special committees for maritime and construction, and we have an overall advisory committee focusing on occupational safety and health across industry sectors. These committees provide feedback on rules we're developing, review our strategic plan and weigh in on other issues.
- For example, the construction committee formed its own subgroup to address ergonomics in construction since our proposal focuses only on general industry. This group developed its own guidelines for preventing musculoskeletal disorders in construction--and those recommendations now appear on our website under the auspices of the committee.
- The Internet has been an excellent tool for us to serve our customers. All of our regulations appear on the site, as well as inspection instructions for our field staff, publications, news releases and links to other materials. We also have special interactive software we've developed called "compliance advisors." These software packages walk our customers through some of the more complicated OSHA standards--helping them determine whether they're covered and what they need to do.
- We've also developed a special page for small business to help them get the information they need. Can't find it on the website? Push a button to contact our small business liaison to get the help you need. Personal attention and hand-holding--rare commodities in bureaucracies and fast-paced Washington. Our liaison may refer small businesses to one of our local offices or to our free consultation services for face-to-face help.

and subsequent enforcement activity have been viewed primarily as an adversarial proceeding—a win-lose proposition.

- We need to help the customers we deal with every day—as well as the general public—rethink that mindset. We’re moving in that direction. Our compliance officers are being trained to help employers analyze safety and health systems and give advice on how to improve safety performance. The advice is free, voluntary, and employers are free to take it or leave it. But our folks are providing suggestions that help employers do a better job—and the employers appreciate it.
- We could do our job without those extras—just come in and run down the checklist. But we serve our customers—including the taxpayers—better when we focus on what the employer is doing right and what could be better—even if there’s no violation of OSHA standards with the current set-up.
- OSHA is in the midst of a paradigm shift that began with the NPR reinvention process and is continuing through GPRA. We’ve got a firm grip on our mission—sending every worker home whole and healthy every day—and now we’re getting a GRIP on new ways of working to achieve that goal.
- Part of that approach is signified by the acronym GRIP—getting results and improving performance. We’ve developed a new model for our area offices--the 66 offices that conduct federal OSHA inspections. That new structure is team-based.
- It’s part of our strategy for delivering performance-based results and achieving the goals in our strategic plan. We’ve given our local offices training in problem-solving and the breakthrough process. With these tools, they’ve addressed local problems and formed partnerships. This is a pro-active approach based on local needs and local experience. We’re planning to include the same training we provided each area office in the initial compliance officer training we provide for new hires.
- Part of our new paradigm involves viewing employers and employees as potential partners. We’ve been expanding partnership opportunities—primarily at the local level. Sometimes these partnerships are industry-based, such as steel erection in Colorado, poultry processing in Georgia or the construction industry in Florida. Or they may cut across a variety of industries like the LeHigh Valley Partnership in Pennsylvania and the Cowtown partnership in Texas.
- Virtually all of our partnerships include outreach and training and a commitment on the part of individual work sites to develop effective safety and health programs.
- OSHA has had a partnership program for the best of the best—the Voluntary Protection Program—for more than 17 years. VPP recognizes exemplary employers that establish effective safety and health programs. Together the 570 employers in these programs are saving \$110 million each year thanks to 50 percent fewer injuries. Star employers serve as models—and in some cases mentors—for others in their industries of how to do it right. Need to tap private resources to

illness data each year from 80,000 individual sites.

- We use the data for targeting inspections and alerting employers to their high injury rates. Each year, we will send letters to about 12,000 employers with the worst records. In addition to advising people they made our list because of their high rates, we encourage them to take steps to improve—to contact a private consultant, to call their insurance company, to arrange a visit from the free state consultation service. And above all, to establish a safety and health program.
- By the end of this year, OSHA inspectors will visit about 2,200 of these sites—beginning with those whose injury and illness rates are four times the private sector average. Focusing our inspections is also part of serving our customers. We must see that employees most at risk receive the protection they need. We want to ensure that employers most in need of OSHA help get it. And we serve the American taxpayer well by spending our resources wisely.
- There's another aspect to customer service that we all need to address—and that's our internal customers -- our own employees. If we don't communicate well within our own agencies, how can we hope to communicate to the broader communities we serve?
- This is an area that we've begun to work on within OSHA. When we surveyed our own people more than a year ago, we found that they were not all on board in terms of OSHA's approach to its mission. We've gone back and revisited this issue in small groups.
- Peter Drucker has said, "To satisfy the customer is the mission and purpose of every business." I believe customer satisfaction is an important component of government service. That doesn't mean trying to please every person every time, especially for regulatory agencies. And in the customer satisfaction survey that OSHA participated in this summer, you will see our results will be low for all of government. We surveyed the people we regulate (while others, including EPA, declined to survey those who are regulated) and our score will reflect that people are not always happy with regulators.
- But we can still regulate with professionalism and inspect with courtesy. Even if our customers aren't happy with the results, we want them to respect the services being provided.
- This means making progress toward our goals—reducing injuries and illnesses and deaths in the workplace—or improving the quality of our environment.
- It means that those who contact us have a right to prompt answers and fair treatment. Those who complain need to be heard. Those who want a seat at the table need the opportunity to participate in rulemaking. Those who seek information should get it.
- The Postal Service has it right—"We deliver for you." That's the commitment we need to make as federal agencies and as individual civil servants. That's what customer service is all about – is delivering for the American public.
- I know we in OSHA still have a ways to go to achieve the goals we want. I commend you in EPA for convening this conference to address how you will approach the topic. I look forward to

Answer: People are hurting and it represents 1/3 of all injuries on the job. What is new is the science of ergonomics is growing. Given high number of people hurting we need to focus on what we can do. Our proposed regulations focus on what industry is already doing. We need to look at what businesses can do to have less stressful work environment. It will save the businesses money and protect the workers.